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REPORT OF OPERATIONS IN THE OPHTHALMIC DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY HOSPITAL OF BOSTON,

UNDER THE CARE OF DR. WILLIAMS, FOR FOUR MONTHS ENDING DEC. 31ST, 1864.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

EXTRACTION OF CATARACT, twelve cases, in patients from 65 to 75 years of age. In five patients both eyes were operated on the same day. Ether was given in eight of the operations, and more favorable results were obtained in the cases where it was made use of; though, as will be seen, the difference of termination must be ascribed to other causes rather than to the administration or non-administration of an anæsthetic. The downward section was made in ten, the upward in two cases. In only one instance has any secondary operation been required for the removal of remnants of capsule. All but one of the patients were discharged within three weeks from the day of operation. A considerable amount of vitreous was lost in two cases; but no ill consequence followed, the eyes recovering so as to be able to read.

Eight operations have been entirely successful; one will require a secondary operation for the removal of capsule obstructing the pupil, and three have failed. In two of the latter, the conduct of the patient was such, in removing the dressings soon after the operation, and in other respects disregarding the injunctions given him, that the surgeon should not be held responsible for the unfortunate result.

Two operations for Iridesis, for congenital cataract, in a child nine weeks old. In this patient only the central portion of the lens was opaque, and iridesis was done in preference to the operation for solution of the cataract, for the following reasons: first, because the operation involves scarcely the slightest risk, and does not require to be repeated, as is often the case with the operation for division and solution of the lens; secondly, the patient is able, in after life, to dispense with the use of cataract glasses, which are, on the contrary, required when the crystalline lens has been removed by absorption.

The iridesis was done by making a puncture, with a broad needle, through the sclerotica, just in front of the iris, then a fine blunt platinum hook, bent at a suitable angle, was passed through the wound and over the lower margin of the pupil, and the iris was drawn out a short distance, and left between the lips of the wound, there to form adhesions. The pupil is thus displaced downwards, and has a balloon shape instead of the normal circular form; but the deformity is not conspicuous, and, if regarded as such, proves a far less annoyance than the wearing of cataract glasses.

Ether was given, and the child was not conscious of the operation; neither did it appear to suffer a moment's inconvenience afterwards. A slight blush of redness immediately about the minute wounds was the only symptom, and the child was discharged on the third day. When seen a few weeks afterwards, the result of the operation was entirely satisfactory; the child evidently noticing objects, and the eyeballs having lost in a great measure the oscillating motion peculiar to sightless eyes.

Out-scooping of cataract, combined with iridectomy, was performed in one case on a patient of middle age. An incision was made at the upper part of the cornea with a very broad, bent, lance-shaped knife. Iridectomy, upward, was then done, and, the capsule of the lens having first been divided, Critchett's vectis scoop was introduced behind the crystalline, and the lenticular substance removed, the scoop being three times inserted. The patient recovered rapidly.

Iridectomy was done in eight other cases; in one case, of glaucomatous affection, with advantage to the patient, but in several instances of closed pupil after chronic iritis, and in one case of sympathetic ophthalmia, no benefit, as regards vision, was obtained or expected, the cases being regarded as unfavorable, and of too long standing to allow of the hope of restoration of vision, and the operation being performed principally to relieve the pain and arrest the process of disorganization.

The entire iris was removed in one case. The pupil was blocked up by deposits; but as the iris seemed in other respects healthy and the cornea and anterior chamber were normal, it was determined, as the patient's other eye was unsound, to give this eye the chance afforded by iridectomy. When careful traction came to be made upon the lower part of the iris to bring out a portion of it for excision, it was seen that the adhesions of the false membranous deposits closing the pupil were so firm that, instead of separating from them at the lower edge of the pupil, the iris gave way at its upper border. It became folded upon itself in such a manner that Dr. Williams deemed it safer to remove the whole iris than to allow it to remain in the eye. Not the slightest inflammation ensued, the eye recovering as rapidly as after an ordinary iridectomy: but during the operation the lens and its suspensory ligament were found to have undergone such transformation as to warrant the belief that all the internal tissues must have suffered, and to exclude the hope of vision.

Enucleation of the eyeball in two cases. In the first, the eye had been penetrated on the 3d of July by a fragment of percussion cap, and vision destroyed. About a month later the other eye became affected by sympathetic ophthalmia. All treatment having been neglected till 19th Sept., the time of entrance to hospital, vision in the second eye was limited to scarcely more than a perception of light. The injured eye should have been removed at least as soon as the earliest symptoms were manifested in the other eye; but the operation still offering the sole chance of an arrest of the sympathetic disease, it was determined on. Vision slowly improved in the remaining eye for a brief period; but this temporary gain was followed by a gradual loss of sight, the morbid process going on notwithstanding the performance of iridectomy and a resort to suitable internal remedies.

The second case of enucleation was for melanotic disease. When discharged, the patient was doing well, though sufficient time had not elapsed to allow of an opinion as to the return of the disease.

Division of the internal rectus, for convergent strabismus, was done in four cases, all of them successful.

Ablation of large staphyloma, involving the anterior half of the globe, was resorted to in one case, with excellent success. The protrusion was so large as to interfere with closure of the lids, and caused great discomfort to the patient. After etherization, the operation was done as proposed by Mr. Critchett, five curved needles armed with sutures being first passed through the globe, from above downwards, just posterior to the ciliary region, after which the anterior portion of the eye was excised. The needles were then drawn through, and the five sutures tied. The patient had no pain, and no inflammatory action was set up. All the sutures were taken out within a week, and the patient was discharged on the tenth day. The wound of the eye had then closed, and the patient had an excellent stump for the support of an artificial eye.

ENDURANCE OF HUMAN LIFE.—A remarkable instance of the power of supporting hunger has recently occurred at Horsham, near Melbourne, in Australia. Two boys, aged nine and five, and a girl of seven, being sent into the "bush" to gather broom, lost their way, and after a long search, in which the natives were employed, were discovered sleeping on a clump of broom. They had been eight days and nine nights without food, and with only one drink of water.—*London Lancet.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE DIET OF THE IRISH LABORER.

BY E. D. MAPOTHER, M.D., SURGEON TO ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL, DUBLIN, &c.

* * * * * * * THE faults of the potato as an extensive article of human food have been so often expatiated upon, that I fear I shall be deemed tiresome if I allude to them; but it is notorious that principles of public health require repeated reiteration before they achieve any practical reform. The value of any aliment is pretty nearly proportional to its similarity in chemical composition with the blood which it is destined to form; and, judged by this test, the potato makes a sorry figure. Their composition, in 100 parts, is compared in the following table:—

	Blood.	Potatoes.
Nitrogenized or flesh-producing matter, - -	20.00	1.6
Unnitrogenized or heat-producing matter, - - -	00.15	22.83
Saline matter, - - - - - - -	00.63	1.56

It will be readily seen that the heat-producing element, or the starch, is out of all due proportion, especially as the mean temperature of this climate is but 51 degrees. I have no doubt but that this over-abundant supply of starchy material is a principal cause of the great prevalence of rheumatic diseases among the inhabitants of this country; for they are owing to some acid (in my opinion probably carbonic), which such food produces in the blood, and which is prevented from being eliminated through the skin by the great humidity of the atmosphere. The great size of the starch grain renders its conversion into sugar difficult. The amount of gluten, or flesh-producing material, is so small as to be quite unable to keep up a high degree of physical strength and energy. The Hindoos and the inhabitants of tropical America subsist respectively on rice and the plantain, substances which bear the most striking similarity in composition to the potato; and were it not for the loftier impress the Creator has stamped on the Caucasian race, the ennobling influence of Christianity and civilization, and the mental vivacity of the Irish people, I cannot help believing that our poor countrymen would in time, from similarity of food, sink to as low a level in the human scale. The amount of labor each of these races is capable of performing is most strictly in proportion to the amount of nutritive matter in their national diet.

It has been calculated that a healthy laboring man should be supplied daily with such an amount of food as shall contain 5500 grains of carbon and 125 grains of nitrogen; and Dr. Letheby, the officer of health for the city of London, states that these are contained in about 12 oz. of beef, 20 oz. of bread, and ½ an oz. of butter. This food, besides being expended in maintaining the never-ceasing vital processes of the body, is capable of supporting an amount of muscular work equivalent to the raising of about three millions of pounds to the height of one foot. I am aware such theoretical estimates must be controlled by practice; for aliments differ widely in digestibility, cohesion, mechanical state, &c., as well as in chemical composition; but what a vast amount of potatoes should be consumed to afford the due quantity of nitrogen! From 8 to 12 pounds of potatoes was the average allowance to each laborer; and this great bulk produced such a distension of the stomach and other digestive organs, that they came to resemble those of a pure vegetable-feeding animal; whereas man's teeth and digestive organs indicate that he was destined to live on a far different kind of food. The bulk of the potatoes has also been found a serious obstacle to their carriage to any locality where scarcity should arise. The introduction of flesh-producing food into the blood tends to the removal of the effete or worn-out materials, and thus may be explained the frequency and fatality of fever and other contagious diseases among the poorer classes; for it is upon these effete products that fevers are fed. I have no doubt but that examination of the blood of the Irish poor would show fibrin, which is one of these waste products, to be more abundant than in that of other races. * * * * * * * * *

The New Zealanders are most frequently attacked by scrofulous diseases since Captain Cook substituted the potato for fish and pig's flesh, their former food. The ash of the potato is most remarkably poor in lime and magnesia, materials of the first importance in building up the framework of the body; and this may account for the considerable frequency of rickets, a disease of the bones produced by their deficiency. The water being strongly impregnated with lime may obviate this difficulty in some districts. It is a well-known fact that the cornea or transparent coat of the eye is apt to become destroyed if food of a varied character, or containing a due proportion of nitrogen, be not supplied. This is accounted for by the fact that that structure contains a large amount of nitrogen, and is not very freely supplied with blood. Nearly all intelligent travellers acquainted with the influence of food upon health have urged strongly that the dietaries of the Irish poor-houses are too unvaried, although not deficient in quantity, and the frequency of ophthalmia seems due in great part to this fault. All the remarks which I shall make upon the improvement of diet would apply to that of poor-houses; and here I must express my surprise that the potato, which, with all its faults, is a valuable antiscorbutic, is wholly excluded from the regular meals of their inmates.

By the report of the Census Commissioners, just issued, we learn that there are 3,149 blind males and 3,730 blind females, or 1 in every 843 of the population. In 1851, the proportion was but 1 in 864. The inferiority of the food of females, and the depreciation of the food of the poor in general, go far to explain these figures. In Norway the food is very poor in nitrogen, and the proportion of blind is 1 in 540. In the United States it is superior, and the ratio is but 1 in 2,489. * * * * * * * *

As there is no safer guide in estimating the value of foods, when modifying circumstances are duly considered, than chemical analysis, I have appended the following

Table of the Nutritive Value of Food per Cent.

	Nitrogenized.	Starchy.	Fat.	Salts.	Water.
Arrow-root,	. . .	82	. .	. .	18
Potatoes,	2·0	23	0·2	0·7	74
Cow's Milk,	4.5	5	4·1	0·7	86
Rice,	7·0	76	0·3	0·3	14
Indian Meal,	9·0	65	8·0	1·7	14
Wheat Flour,	11.0	70	2·0	1.7	15
Oatmeal,	12.0	62	6.0	3·0	15
Eggs,	14·0	. .	10.5	1·5	74
Beef,	19·0	. .	5·0	2·0	73
Peas,	22·0	58	2·0	3·0	13
Beans,	24·0	44	1·4	3·6	14
Lentils,	29·0	44	1·5	2.3	14

I shall now proceed to allude to a few of these in detail, which I believe might be very advantageously used in greater quantity than at present, premising that a dry, nitrogenized food seems suitable for the circumstances of Ireland, as, the temperature being moderate, no great abundance of heat-producing food is needed, and as the great humidity of the atmosphere prevents much loss of water by the skin.

In those countries where the supply of animal food is over-abundant, it is of great importance that the surplus should be preserved, and exported for consumption in other countries. Thus, in Monte Video and other districts of South America, vast numbers of cattle are slain, and the choicest parts of the animals' flesh are cut in thin flakes, dipped in brine, and then dried in the sun. This tasajo, or jerked beef, has been used for many years as food for the negroes; but of late, owing to the American wars, it has not reached that market. The authorities of Monte Video have, therefore, exported this jerked beef in great quantities to the British ports. Mr. Gilmour, the consul at Glasgow for the Republic, has, at the suggestion of Professor Archer, the director of the Industrial Museum of Scotland, had forwarded to me a large quantity of the beef, specimens of which I submit. When steeped in water, it increases three times in thickness and weight. It is not expected to supersede the use of flesh meat with those who can afford it; but I am convinced no greater boon has been offered for many years to the poor and laboring classes in this country. It sells at 3*d*. a pound, or 2¼*d*. if large quantities are purchased. With the invaluable aid of Professor Galloway, of the Museum of Irish Industry, I have submitted it to analysis, as well as averaged samples of corned beef prepared in this city, and I subjoin the comparative results.

The amount of fat in each is not astonishing, when it is remembered that one animal enjoyed free exercise—the other was stall fed:—

	Monte Video Beef.	Corned Beef.
Water,	17·93	62.08
Ash,	21·66	9·97
Fat,	3·05	21.07
Nitrogenized substances,	57·35*	6·88†
	100·00	100·00

I am informed that an employer in Belfast is testing its value in the feeding of 1500 workmen; but the only way in which it will find its way to the homes of the poor is by giving them an opportunity of tasting it cooked in the best methods. This was accomplished by a working men's free supper in Edinburgh; and the agent has authorized me to announce that he would supply the beef for a similar meeting, if organized in this city.

The only method of cooking which I will detail, from the directions of the Monte Video commissioners, is the following, as I can from personal experience vouch for its producing a wholesome and palatable dish:—After steeping the beef in water, to which soda is added in the proportion of one ounce to the gallon, changed three or four times, for three hours, take a sufficient quantity of the meat, according to the size of the dish required, and cut it into small pieces; take an equal quantity of potatoes, and peel and wash them; put them into a clean saucepan, and cover them with water, and let them stew over a slow fire (adding pepper, salt, chopped onions, &c.), until well cooked, in the same manner as when making Irish stew.

From the great heat of the climate, the beef cannot be saved in thick masses; and as some of the savory and volatile materials of the meat are lost by cutting it in thin slices, I have suggested that Professor Morgan's patented plan of salting by injection be adopted, especially as the beef killed in summer is very superior. It might be also economically and commercially advantageous to reduce the beef to the form of extract before exportation. The extract of beef contains all the nutritive portions of the meat, and, from its soluble and concentrated state, is the most powerful restorative the physician can employ. It can be best made, as Liebig directs, by boiling the meat, chopped fine, in eight times its weight of water, straining, and evaporating the solution in a water bath to a soft, but solid state. Such a product would cost about 8*s.* a pound in this country, but should be obtained for one third that sum in Monte Video. The addition of a little hydrochloric acid would dissolve the flesh more completely.

The tribe of plants which far excel all others in the amount of nitrogenized matter they produce, is the Leguminosæ. Their seeds have been used for many centuries by the inhabitants of Central Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia; and how perfect a support they afford is attested in Holy Writ. In the Book of Daniel we read that the Hebrews were supported upon pulse and water, "and after ten days their faces appeared fairer and fatter than all the children that ate of the king's meat." Herodotus tells us, too, that lentils formed the food of the laborers who built the Pyramids. The following analyses by Payen exhibit the composition of peas—firstly, gathered green and then dried; and, secondly, those gathered when dry:—

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* Containing 7·67 Nitrogen, = 49·80 Fibrin.
† Containing 0·49 Nitrogen, = 3·18 Fibrin.

	Peas dried green.	Dry ripe Peas.
Starchy matter,	58·5	58·7
Nitrogenized matter,	25·4	23·8
Fatty matter,	2·0	2·1
Cellulose,	1.9	3.5
Salts,	2·5	2.1
Water,	9·7	9.8
	100·00	100·0

Their superiority in composition, and greater solubility in water, when pulled green, suggests that that plan should be adopted, especially as the ground is thus left in July ready for another crop, and insects cannot damage the return. The starchy matter then is sufficiently abundant, and the nitrogenized substance exists in great quantity, and is, moreover, of the most excellent quality, being legumin, which is identical with the casein of milk, and therefore of all aliments the most soluble and most natural. Their nitrogenous element is so abundant that one pound of peas must form as much muscle as fifteen pounds of potatoes. Legumin, with lime, forms a hard, insoluble, and rather indigestible compound; and it is well known that in this way peas boiled in hard water are not very quickly or comfortably digested, but the addition of a little soda, or the substitution of river, or, still better, rain water, in which they should be steeped for a few hours, removes this objection. However, moderate slowness of digestion is not an objection to an aliment for a working man, as hunger then more slowly returns in the intervals of his meals. The Scotch often use the pea-meal, simply mixed up with boiling water,—a mess they call "brose." During a recent visit to the neighborhood of Mr. Allan Pollok's vast property in the county of Galway, I was informed that his laborers, especially during harvest time—the season of greatest muscular exertion—were fed upon pease porridge, and the only objection I heard offered to it was "that it was very stuffing, and that it was a long time before appetite returned." This was a complaint which I wish our half-fed peasantry were able to make; and at any rate it could be easily removed by diminishing the proportion of peas to other food. The highly nutritious value of the pea has been long recognized in China, where they manufacture most excellent cheese from it. Under the name of tao-foo it is hawked through the streets of their cities, and consumed in great quantities. They make it by steeping, boiling, grinding, and dissolving the peas in water. The vegetable casein is precipitated by gypsum, and is then salted and pressed into moulds. The sandy, gravelly, and calcareous soil of many parts of Ireland is very fit for the growth of peas, which, moreover, require no manuring if seeds, and not abundant straw, be required.

The leguminous seeds are particularly rich in lime and in phosphoric acid, that great constituent of the nobler parts of man, the brain and locomotive organs, the apparatus of his mental and corporeal powers. As regards the mode of preparing these valuable articles for human food, much has to be learned; but I now exhibit specimens of bread made with various proportions of pea:—Griddle cakes of one-half wheat-flour and one-half pea-flour, one-half wheat-flour and one-half pea-meal, of three-fourths wheaten-flour and one-fourth of pea-flour, of three-fourths wheat-flour and one-fourth pea-meal, of three-fourths wheaten-flour and one-fourth bean-meal; loaves of one-fourth pea-flour and three-fourths wheat-flour, and of one-third bean-meal and two-thirds whole-meal; which I have labelled accordingly, and now submit for your inspection. Pea-soup is an article too universally valued to require notice. Indian meal would be a very fit addition to pea-flour, as its large amount of fat would obviate any astringent property which it sometimes exerts. I may add, that at present these meals may be had at reasonable prices, which, however, would be greatly reduced, if the crop were generally adopted. Pea flour, from which all husk is removed, sells at 3*s.* 6*d.* per stone, pea-meal at 2*s.* 5*d.*, and bean-meal at 1*s.* 10*d.* It is stated that immensely expensive article, "Revalenta," is but Glasgow pea-flour, of about the value of 2*d.* per pound. Beans sold this year in the county of Clare, for 8*d.* a stone. Peas enter into the dietary of the navy and emigrant ships, and are highly prized; and beans form a considerable element of the food of the U. S. army, and of the laboring population of that country. During the famine, the authorities seem to have recognized their nutritive value: for one vessel alone, the U. S. war-ship "Macedonia," carried over 11,388 lbs. of peas, and 19,424 lbs. of beans. A very superior pea is imported from Canada. In Prussia and Germany the pea is felt to be the poor man's comfort; and in Bavaria it is invariably added to the rye-flour in making their bread. I had this summer an opportunity of judging of its value as a general food in these countries. In Scotland, too, it is well known that a mixture of peas and oat-meal forms the staple diet; and the more closely farmers and other employers can be induced to assimilate the food of the Irish to that of the Scotch laborer, the higher they will raise his mental and physical capacities.

The advantages of whole-meal bread over that made with white flour alone are numerous. Chemical analysis shows that one-third of the entire gluten, or nutritive portion of the grain, exists in the bran, and the microscope confirms this fact; and surely it is fitter that this valuable material should be used by man than bestowed upon our cattle. It has been proved, too, that the large amount of gluten promotes the conversion of the starch into sugar—a necessary change before it can be of the slightest alimentary value. Even the outermost husk is useful, as its finely divided particles stimulate the natural movements of the digestive canal. If this proceed to an objectionable degree, the gluten can be extracted by water, and the bread then made with this. A dog which will sink in forty days if fed solely on white bread, will thrive well if fed upon whole-meal bread. The use of the whole-meal would also remove the temptation to adulterate bread with damaged flour rendered white by alum, sulphate of copper, or other injurious agents. If, however, white bread be still preferred, let lime water be substituted for these hurtful salts, as suggested by Liebig, and adopted by the Glasgow bakers with great success. As whole-meal contains three times as much saline matter as fine flour, it is an especially suitable food for children, when the solid frame-work of the body is being built; and as bran contains six times as much potash as flour, it should not be wasted, as that alkali is the only known preventive of scurvy. We are receding in the art of dietetics in regard to whole-meal bread, for up to some forty years ago it was most generally used in these countries. In France, in 1658, an ordinance of Louis XIV. was issued, which had the effect of compelling the bran to be used with the flour as human food, and in ancient times the process of bolting flour, or separating the bran, was unknown. The gluten which is separated in starch manufactories amounts annually to several thousand pounds; and if this were boiled in water to which a little salt was added, and then dried and ground, a material of the highest nutritive value would be produced.

There are many parts of this country unsuited for the culture of wheat, and in these places rye would form an admirable substitute. It thrives and produces abundant returns in sandy, calcareous soil, even at high elevations; endures greater cold, ripens in a much shorter period of sunshine than wheat, and grows so rapidly that it overreaches all weeds, which are then comparatively harmless to it. It contains equal quantities of nutriment with that grain, and the bread made from it excels wheaten bread in retaining moisture and remaining fresh. Its crumbling character makes it easily digested, and it is said a smaller portion satisfies hunger and supports life than of most other breads, while a smaller proportion of the flour is required to make an equal weight of bread. The only objection which can be urged against it is the trivial one of color. It forms the staple food of central and northern Europe, and all parts of America where Germans have settled; and it is recorded of the people of Westphalia, who live almost altogether upon it, that they are more free from dyspeptic complaints than almost any other people. Rye contains twice as much as lime, and three times as much phosphoric acid, as wheat. M. D. Jonnes, a great French statician, ascertained that the soil of Ireland would produce three times as much rye as that of England, and one and a half times as much rye as wheat.

The leaves of the cabbage plant abound in nitrogen and lime, materials so deficient in the potato, and have been long recognized as a most valuable addition to that food, in the form of kolcannon. I may mention that in the absence of this plant the leaves of the turnip and other green crops form a most wholesome aliment, which in this country is generally wasted or given to feed cattle, whereas in London they are valued even above the cabbage plant. The removal of the leaves of the turnip would not be injurious to this root, or rather underground succulent stem, at the proper period. It may not be generally known that boiling turnips with the skins on improves the flavor, and renders them so mealy that they may be crushed into a flour, which may be profitably used in making a cheap bread. I have now alluded to as many food topics as time will allow; and however humble my ability to discuss them may have appeared, I trust no one will deem the subject unimportant. As an hospital medical officer, the effects of a faulty diet are daily present before me in the patients seeking admission, and I cannot help reflecting on some remedies. The cultivation of maize, buck-wheat, quinoa, dhurra, Indian vetch, and other food grains, and the utilization of many now wasted parts of the animals we slaughter, are questions worthy the attention of economic botanists and agriculturists, and of individuals or societies concerned in the preservation of public health, if such existed in Ireland.—*Journal of Royal Dublin Society.*

Bibliographical Notices.

Lectures on Venereal Diseases. By WILLIAM A. HAMMOND, M.D
Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1864.

THIS volume is made up of 20 lectures, a part of which were delivered to a medical class in Baltimore, and published in a medical journal. The course was interrupted by the departure of the author in 1861 to enter the army again, and the whole have been lately re-written and are now published in a handsome volume of 287 pages. Dr. Hammond modestly says that they are not to be looked upon as a complete treatise on venereal diseases or to be classed with the excellent work of Dr. Bumstead, which he pronounces "better than any volume on the subject with which he is acquainted." This judgment will explain to all who have read the work thus alluded to the views of our author in relation to most of the main theories relative to syphilis; they are entirely in conformity with the modern doctrine of dualism. In some of the minor details, however, he has his own opinions, and expresses them in a very decided manner, although he always endeavors to furnish clinical evidence of their truth. Indeed, one of the great merits of the book is the freshness afforded to nearly every page by the experience of its writer, which was gained in great part during his sojourn with the army in Mexico. Whether the conclusions from these observations are entirely satisfactory or are perhaps somewhat hastily drawn, must be determined by a perusal of the volume, for a proper consideration of these points would require a review in detail of all the modern doctrines in relation to syphilis. We can assure our readers, however, that time thus spent will never be regretted, and that they will learn at least that there is more need to study venereal diseases now, than if Ricord had never written a page of the writings which so many have thought would render all other books upon these subjects unnecessary.

It may be interesting to those who remember the order of Dr. Hammond in relation to calomel while occupying the post of Surgeon-general, to know what views with regard to the use of mercury in the treatment of syphilis he now advocates. They will be found in part in the following extract, but throughout the book it appears that he considers it the only remedy in the *cure* of this disease :—

"You know what my views are relative to mercury. I have told you, over and over again, what a double-edged weapon it is, and that it has been and still is abused to such an extent, that I verily believe the evil it has done far exceeds all the beneficial effects which have resulted from its use. * * * * * * *

"However, we are now considering the treatment of constitutional syphilis, and, as I have already told you, I regard mercury as a highly proper and very valuable means to be used in this disease. I do not regard it as essential, but I do look upon it as almost as potent a specific against the venereal poison as is quinia against the morbific matter which gives rise to intermittent fever. I do not speak without having myself often treated the disease under consideration without any form of mercury, either internally or externally administered. At the commencement of my military medical life I was deeply imbued with the views of Mr. Guthrie, who was a violent anti-mercurialist, and I treated for two or three years all my cases of syphilis without an atom of this medicine. But I was not satisfied with the results. The manifestations of this disease were more severe and lasted longer than was to have been expected ; and I, therefore, did what I trust you will all do when you discover that you have been holding erroneous views and doing wrong acts—changed my practice ; and I have never regretted it to this day."

The writer's views on the nature of gonorrhœa are so peculiar that we present them to the reader in his own words without comment. We can only say that he founds them upon evidence which he offers to the judgment of all. They certainly deserve the attention of all observers, and are undoubtedly in some measure true.

"1st. That the virus of an infecting chancre, when deposited upon a secreting mucous surface, may give rise to an inflammation of that surface, attended with a muco-purulent discharge, without a chancre being necessarily formed, unless an abrasion exists ; in which case, if the chancrous virus comes in contact with it, a chancre will in all probability be produced, and will co-exist with the general inflammation.

"2d. That the affection thus produced by the virus of the infecting chancre is a syphilitic gonorrhœa ; that it is followed by constitutional manifestations, and is contagious ; and that, though the local disease will disappear without specific treatment, the general symptoms are more efficaciously treated with mercury.

"3d. That the virus of a soft, non-infecting chancre, when deposited on a secreting mucous surface upon which there is no abrasion, generally gives rise to a muco-purulent discharge without the necessary production of a chancre; that if there be an abrasion, the liability to chancre is much increased; that both diseases may exist in one individual; and that the discharge from the inflamed mucous membrane is capable of giving rise to a similar discharge in other persons; and that it is not followed by any specific constitutional symptoms.

"4th. That the two sources named are the only ones from which a contagious gonorrhœa can *originate*, though it may be *transmitted*, according to its kind, from one individual to another.

"5th. That there are thus two species of virulent gonorrhœa corresponding to the two species of chancre; that both are contagious; but that only that due to the virus of the infecting chancre is followed by constitutional infection, or can give rise to syphilis by inoculation.

"6th. That the matter of each of these species of gonorrhœa will, when inoculated, give rise to its own particular form of chancre; but that greater care and longer contact are necessary than are required with the virus direct from the chancre.

"7th. That the muco-purulent discharges from the urethra or vagina, due to inflammation or irritation caused by stimulating food, excess of venery, acrid applications, the introduction of instruments, injuries, ascarides, &c., are not contagious, and are simply cases of urethritis or vaginitis, in nowise possessed of any specific characteristics."

The Philosophy of Marriage, in its Social, Moral and Physical Relations with the Physiology of Generation in the Vegetable and Animal Kingdoms. By MICHAEL RYAN, M.D., Member of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in London. From the last London Edition. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston. 1864.

THERE will always be a question in the minds of many whether such books as this should be placed in the hands of the public. The present volume, however, seems to have been written by the author solely with a purpose to benefit his fellow men, and although an unworthy curiosity may lead many to read it, the information it may impart to those completely ignorant of many important laws of nature and hygienė must far outweigh any objection of this kind.

A Comprehensive Medical Dictionary: containing the Pronunciation, Etymology, and Signification of the Terms made use of in Medicine and the kindred Sciences. With an Appendix, comprising a complete list of all the more important Articles of the Materia Medica, arranged according to their Medicinal Properties. Also an explanation of the Latin Terms and Phrases occurring in Anatomy, Pharmacy, &c.; together with the necessary directions for writing Latin Prescriptions, &c. &c. By J. THOMAS, M.D. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1864.

THIS, as the title-page indicates, is a very useful book. There are, unfortunately for themselves, many good physicians in our country who have not had the advantage of an early classical education, and who never feel sure of their use and pronunciation of words and phrases of Latin and Greek origin. We would not restrict the application of this observation, however, to any class among us, for we are sorry to confess that there is a general want of uniformity in many of the words in daily use by the profession. As the author truly says, correct pronunciation is to the speaker what correct spelling is to the writer, and too little attention is paid to this part of medical education. Some excellent prefatory rules are given relative to accentuation, which deserve the attention of teachers as well as students, for the former are in great measure accountable for the subsequent shortcomings of their hearers in this respect. The book is published in a beautiful form, and cannot help being of value in the library of every one interested in medicine.

Theory and Practice of the Movement Cure: or the Treatment of Lateral Curvature of the Spine; Paralysis; Indigestion; Constipation; Consumption; Angular Curvatures, and other Deformities; Diseases incident to Women; Derangements of the Nervous System; and other Chronic Affections, by the Swedish System of Localized Movements. By Charles F. Taylor, M.D. Second Edition. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston. 1864.

Our readers are already acquainted with the method of treatment set forth in this volume. There is undoubtedly a substratum of truth in the theory, for we see every day the power of mere muscular exercise in the preservation of health, even when used in no definite direction. It is without question of great service in some deformities and in certain deranged conditions of the general economy, but we doubt very much the propriety even of its application to many of the affections in which the author claims for it a positive curative action. The volume is clearly printed, on smooth, white paper, and is illustrated with numerous explanatory cuts.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON: THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 1865.

Alleged Deaths from Inhalation of Sulphuric Ether.—The recent death of Mr. and Mrs. Defrees at Ballard Vale has given rise to a report, which has been widely circulated through the public press, that their death was caused by the inhalation of sulphuric ether, which they had both inhaled for its anæsthetic properties after retiring at night. To any one acquainted with the physical properties of sulphuric ether, the story bears the stamp of improbability on its very face. We hold that it would be next to impossible for any one, even with the intent to commit suicide, to kill himself by inhaling this anæsthetic. Such is its extreme volatility that it would be hardly possible for enough of its vapor to be breathed in by any one to whom it was self-administered, after the stage of unconsciousness was reached, to prolong that condition to the extinction of life; the ether in the vehicle would all evaporate first. Such would not be the case with chloroform, however, as repeated instances of accidental death in this vicinity have shown. The unfortunate victim of bodily or mental suffering has fallen asleep with the fatal napkin moistened with this agent over his mouth, and the heavy fluid, instead of rapidly flying off into the surrounding atmosphere as ether does, has continued its stupefying work after the volition of the inhaler was subdued, to the complete destruction of life. It is very important that the truth in this matter should be known, and that the innocent anæsthetic, which is almost universally employed here, should not have a reputation of deadliness fastened upon it by unfounded newspaper paragraphs, which only belongs in reality to its European representative, chloroform. We find in the *Andover Advertiser* the following authentic statement of the cause of the death of this unfortunate pair.

"At the coroner's inquest, held in Ballard Vale, on Wednesday, the 18th inst., upon the bodies of Joseph S. DeFrees and Augusta B. DeFrees his wife, it appeared in evidence that they had slept in the room in which they were found dead, since Friday last, the 13th inst. That the house was recently built and was still very damp, and the rooms consequently very tight, not allowing the air to come into the rooms through the cracks about the doors and windows, as is ordinarily the case. On Friday night they had a coal fire in their room in the early part of the night. The fire was in a small, open-grate stove. They went to bed about twelve o'clock; the door of the room was tightly closed during the night. They left their room at half past five on Saturday morning, having slept in this tight room with a fire in it about five hours and a half. On Saturday the door of the room was open during the day. On Saturday night they again slept with the room door closed and with a fire, and the same number of hours; and the same on Sunday night, the room door having been left open during the day. On Monday a fire was kept in the room all day and the door kept closed. On Tuesday morning, after having been in their room as on the previous night, with a fire and the door closed, the room not having been ventilated at all for thirty-six hours, they both got up suffering *very severely* with headache. Mr. DeFrees also vomited after he had been up a little while, and was so unwell that he did not go to his work during the day. In the afternoon, however, they were both quite relieved of their headache, and felt as well as usual. During the day on Tuesday the room door was still kept closed, and a fire kept in the room most of the day. On Tuesday night they went to their room, which had not then been at all ventilated for forty-eight hours and more, at a little past eight o'clock. It is supposed they slept till about midnight, when they were heard doing something with the stove, probably putting on more coal. Nothing more was known or heard of them until about half past six o'clock on Wednesday morning, when they were found in their bed dead, apparently having gone quietly to their last sleep.

"In accordance with this evidence, the jury returned a verdict that 'they came to their death by suffocation caused by coal-gas and the tightness and want of ventilation of their bedroom.'"

Dr. Lee on the Structure and Treatment of Uterine Polypi.—Sir,—I shall feel indebted if you will insert in your Journal the following statement made by me in a paper on "Uterine Polypi," published in the forty-fourth volume of the Medico-Chirurgical *Transactions*:—

"The histories of forty cases of polypus of the uterus are contained in my 'Clinical Reports of Ovarian and Uterine Diseases,' published in 1853. Respecting the results of the treatment adopted in these cases, a recent writer has made the following statement:—

"'That out of twenty cases of removal of fibrous polypus by ligature, recorded by a most strenuous defender of that operation—Dr. R. Lee—nine, or more than one in three, had a fatal result—a mortality more than double that of the operation of lithotomy, as high as that which occurs in placenta prævia, and higher than the mortality from malignant cholera.'"*

The truthfulness of this statement will be speedily judged by those who will take the pains to read this communication attentively.

"I have now the honor of presenting to the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society a history of 105 cases of uterine polypi, reduced into a tabular form, in which the date, name, age, and social condition of the patients are recorded, and the symptoms and treatment and result are given. All the cases of polypus of the uterus which have ever come under my observation, fortunate and unfortunate, are contained in this table. In three of these 105 cases no operation was performed, and the result was not known. In two of the remaining 100 cases the polypi disappeared spontaneously by some process, the nature of which was not ascertained. One of these (No. 94) occurred in St. George's Hospital, and the polypus was not only felt protruding through the os uteri, but seen.

"Of the ninety-eight cases which remained, five died before any attempt had been made to remove the polypi by ligature or by any other means. The first of these (No. 2) occurred in the Middlesex Hospital, and the nature of the disease was not ascertained until the body was examined after death. In the second (No. 4) the patient died in the Fever Hospital, without any operation having been performed. In the third (No. 5) the patient died under the care of Dr. Sims in the St. Marylebone Infirmary from uterine hæmorrhage and the usual symptoms of cancerous disease of the uterus. In the fifth (No. 85) I had resolved to apply a ligature around the root of the polypus: but the patient, who was under the care of Mr. Barnes, of King's-road, Chelsea, died before the operation was attempted. A preparation of the uterus, with the fibrous polypus adhering to the fundus, is now placed upon the table of the Society, with two correct drawings by Mr. Arthur Roberts, the present Obstetric Assistant of St. George's Hospital.

"After deducting these ten cases there remain ninety-three, of which eight died and eighty-five recovered.

"By referring to the condensed history, it will be seen that in the first of these fatal cases (No. 7) the patient in the St. Marylebone Infirmary was moribund, when Mr. Perry, with the sanction of Dr. Sims, applied the ligature around the root of the polypus, which hung externally, and that she died the same evening. The preparation, with a drawing which has been figured in the Medico-Chirurgical *Transactions*, is now placed upon the table of the Society. I did not see the patient during life, and was not present at the *post-mortem* examination; but, nevertheless, this case is the first which has been adduced by the writer above referred to, to support the conclusion 'that out of twenty cases of removal of fibrous polypus by ligature recorded by me, nine, or more than one in every three, died.' The polypus is still seen hanging from the uterus, and has been laid open to show its structure, and has not yet been removed, and there is no visible mark on the root of the polypus, of the ligature ever having been applied.

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* "Lectures on the Diseases of Women," by Charles West, M.D., &c., 1856, p. 324.

"In the next fatal case the ligature was applied around the root of a large sloughing polypus which was hanging externally.

"In Case 11 Mr. Cæsar Hawkins endeavored to bring down the tumor, which had only passed through the os uteri partially, with a pair of forceps into the vagina; but not succeeding in the attempt, operated, and the polypus was removed by the ligature. Death took place in this case from peritonitis.

"In Case 16 the patient was under the care of Mr. Tatum, in St. George's Hospital, and she died of peritonitis before the root of the polypus had been divided by the ligature. The preparation is now placed upon the table of the Society. I did not see the patient during life; but this is another of the cases which have been adduced to prove that the mortality in my cases (recorded) of uterine polypi 'have been double that of lithotomy, as high as that which occurs in placenta prævia, and higher than the mortality from malignant cholera.'

"By an examination of this condensed history of 103 cases (105) of uterine polypi, it will be seen that of the last fifty cases which have come under my own care, and in which the operation has been performed by me, not one patient has died."

In a work, entitled "Clinical Memoirs on Diseases of Women," published in 1863, by Dr. Alfred H. M'Clintock, there is the following statement at page 183:—

"Now let us investigate a little further the results of *deligation.* Above are three deaths following ten operations, and these were the only fatalities among the thirty-four cases of polypus reported in the present memoir. A very high rate of mortality followed the use of the ligature in the cases reported by Dr. R. Lee, for of fifty-nine instances where the ligature was employed, nine of the women died, and two of these deaths occurred before the removal of the tumor was effected. Thus, then, out of sixty-nine cases of deligation were found twelve deaths, or one in five. Dr. Lee gives thirty-five other cases where polypi were removed by torsion or excision, and among these there is no death."

I hope that it will not be necessary for me again to correct these misrepresentations. I am, &c. Robert Lee.

Medical Times and Gazette.

Stimulants.—An article which appears in the *Popular Science Review* for October sums up in brief certain views of the nature of the therapeutic influence exercised by agents of the class called "stimulants," to which we have already alluded, and which seem worthy of professional attention. The author, Dr. Anstie, notices the capital fact (which seems strongly to point out the necessity of a great reform in our classification) that those actions of brandy, or of strychnia, for instance, which receive the name of "stimulant" *par excellence*, are in reality all of them the result of excessive and positively poisonous doses. He maintains that, unless we are to be involved in constant confusion and self-contradiction, the use of the word stimulant must be limited to physiological agents which simply restore vital motions to their normal level without inflicting *any* damage on the organism: and, on the other hand, that such effects as excessive rapidity of circulation, convulsive action of muscles, fierce or garrulous delirium, and so on, so far from being justly attributable to stimulation, imply an influence precisely the reverse of the latter. The same agents, according to the dose in which they are applied, are either beneficial stimulants, closely approximating to true foods in their therapeutic actions, or simple, unmitigated poisons, producing, as the case may be, narcosis, or acute inflammatory irritation, or excessive secretory discharge, &c.: all these processes are but different expressions of the fact that a part of the organism *has been killed*. For partial death of the organism may for practical purposes be said to occur whenever the exact balance of force and material which constitutes our only realisable notion of life is interrupted in any way. As Dr. Chambers has acutely remarked, the function, for example, of the mucous membrane, is *not* to secrete mucus, except in minute quantity; and it is, therefore, incorrect to speak of mucous catarrh as an instance of exalted or stimulated function: it is, on the contrary, a departure from vital conditions. Surely, in the presence of considerations like these, we shall cease to hear physiologists using such barbarously unmeaning words as "hyper-stimulation," and the like. The science of words is of too much consequence to be utterly neglected in the application of terms which, like the word "stimulant," represent ideas which form the very central point of all symptoms both of physiology and of therapeutics, while their different applications include the whole range of vital and of morbid causes. "Stimulants" lie so frequently at the base of modern medical treatment; the things which are said to stimulate, and this particular word "stimulation," enter so largely into modern medical practice and writing, that we should like to see some more general agreement as to the point of view from which the action of "stimulants" and "narcotics" can be regarded. Dr. Ansie has boldly shattered some favorite idols of the cave; let their worshippers look to their gods.—*London Lancet.*

REPORT OF THE CITY PHYSICIAN.—The Annual Report of Dr. William Read, City Physician, states that the number of persons vaccinated in his office since the last quarterly return, was 195, and the number of children furnished with certificates of vaccination for admission into the public schools, is 80. Fifty-six physicians residing in the city have been furnished with vaccine matter. Early in the season it was found that smallpox had been introduced in the jail, and several of the inmates became sick, but by the removal of all exhibiting any symptoms, and a thorough vaccination of all the inmates, it was prevented from spreading. Hospital accommodations for both male and female prisoners will be provided as soon as contemplated changes are made. During the year there was one birth in the jail.

The health of the inmates of the Temporary Home at No. 36 Charles street has been unusually good. The sick have received attention, and a thorough vaccination has been observed. There have been eight births and eighteen deaths at the Home during the year, the deaths being those of infants abandoned in the streets. Forty-one men appointed on the police have been examined and certificates of their physical ability issued. Nearly one hundred disabled soldiers have been furnished with certificates of their condition to enable them to draw State aid. With the advice and consent of the Mayor, the Police were instructed in October last to canvass the city and report how many citizens were vaccinated. From the returns it appeared that 3372 persons were unprotected from smallpox. It is proposed to continue this sanitary measure. The attention of the city authorities is called to the existing law in regard to the smallpox and infectious diseases, and necessary and important amendments suggested. During the year, thirty-four patients have been treated at the pest house at the South End, and but one death occurred.

The business of the office for 1864 has been as follows:—persons vaccinated, 2504; re-vaccinated, 729; children examined and certificates given them for admission into the public schools, 596; physicians supplied with vaccine material, 199; number of visits made to persons in jail, 695; at the tombs, 19; at the Temporary Home, 60; number of cases of smallpox examined, 39; soldiers examined and certificates of disability given under the direction of the relief committee, 93; examination of persons appointed to the Police, 31; examinations of persons dying with no physician in attendance, and certificates, granted at the request of the City Registrar, 17; number of deaths from smallpox during the year, 113. The report was laid upon the table and ordered to be printed.

THE following petition has been addressed by Dr. Hammond to the Senate of the United States. We hope it may have a respectful consideration:

To the Honorable the Senate of the United States:

"The undersigned, a resident of the City of New York, and late Surgeon-General of the Army of the United States, respectfully represents—

"That he has been deprived of his commission of Surgeon-General, and prohibited from again holding office under the Government of the United States by the sentence of a General Court Martial, under circumstances which he prays your Honorable Body to inquire into before confirming the appointment of his successor.

"He respectfully requests that your Honorable Body will cause to to be printed and will examine the record of the Court Martial, and hear such additional evidence, he was, by the neglect of the Judge Advocate to summon his principal witness, and by other circumstances, unable to lay before the Court, but which it is now in his power to adduce.

"He affirms, in all sincerity, that he believes the finding and sentence of the Court to be illegal, and not warranted by the facts of the case; that they were procured by conspiracy and false testimony, and that consequently his removal from office, and the disability placed upon him, are unjust and wrongful.

"By the failure to prosecute the civil suit instituted against him by order of the Secretary of War, and the fact that there is no appeal from the decision of a Court Martial to a higher Court, your petitioner is debarred all opportunity of vindicating his unjustly aspersed character, but such as your Honorable Body may see fit to afford him.

"For these reasons, he prays your Honorable Body to inquire into all the circumstances connected with his recent trial and dismissal, and to suspend action in the matter of confirming the appointment of his successor, till such inquiry is made, with the view that, should it appear that your petitioner has suffered injustice, he may be, by act of Congress, restored to the position from which he has been displaced.

"And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray, etc.

WILLIAM A. HAMMOND, M.D.

"New York, Dec. 25, 1864."

STATUES TO LAENNEC AND DUPUYTREN.—The Medical Profession in France seems nearly as backward as ourselves in commemorating its celebrities. It was only the other day that a statue was erected to Larrey, and the Medical Association has just determined to organize a subscription for a similar tribute to the memory of Laennec. This again has called to mind the fact that no memorial exists of Dupuytren, notwithstanding his generous legacy of 200,000 francs for the foundation of the Museum which bears his name, and a chair of pathological anatomy.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*

VITAL STATISTICS OF BOSTON.

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, JANUARY 21st, 1865.

DEATHS.

	Males.	*Females.*	*Total.*
Deaths during the week - - - - - - - -	43	45	88
Ave. mortality of corresponding weeks for ten years, 1853—1863,	41.1	40.5	81.6
Average corrected to increased population - - - - -	00	00	89.23
Death of persons above 90 - - - - - - - -	0	0	0

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—Essay on Gun-shot Wounds, for the Fiske Fund Prize, 1864.—Does Man derive the Trichinæ from the flesh of the Hog alone? Is Pork an unhealthy Article of Food?

MARRIED,—At Foxboro', Mass., Jan. 25th, Isaac Smith, Jr., M.D., late Assist. Surg. 26th Mass. Vols., to Miss Annie L. Carpenter, both of F.—In this city, 17th inst., Dr. Elisha M. White, Surgeon of the 37th Regiment, to Miss Amelia Hopkins.

DIED,—At South Lynnfield, 17th inst., Thomas Keenan, M.D., aged 61 years.—At Gorham, Me., Dr. John Waterman, aged 76.—At Chattanooga, Jan. 18th, Dr. R. M. Smith Jackson, U.S. Vols., of Crescent, Pa.

DEATHS IN BOSTON for the week ending Saturday noon, Jan. 21st, 88. Males, 43—Females, 45.—Accident, 1—apoplexy, 2—disease of the bowels, 2—congestion of the brain, 2—disease of the brain, 5—bronchitis, 2—cancer, 1—consumption, 22—convulsions, 3—croup, 2—debility, 1—diarrhœa, 1—diphtheria, 2—dropsy, 1—dropsy of the brain, 1—scarlet fever, 1—typhoid fever, 2—hæmatemesis, 1—disease of the heart, 3—infantile disease, 6—intemperance, 1—disease of the liver, 1—congestion of the lungs, 1—inflammation of the lungs, 5—marasmus, 2—old age, 1—paralysis, 2—puerperal disease, 3—smallpox, 6—unknown, 3—retention of urine, 3—whooping cough, 1.

Under 5 years of age, 29—between 5 and 20 years, 5—between 20 and 40 years, 30—between 40 and 60 years, 19—above 60 years, 5. Born in the United States, 53—Ireland, 24—other places, 11.